



THE OPA INSIDER

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MESSAGE FROM THE PATIENT ADVOCATE

The Office of the Patient Advocate is committed to increasing our impact as a health care consumer resource for informed decision-making. It is only through the hard work of dedicated staff at OPA and the Department of Health Care Services, Enterprise, Innovation & Technology Services Division along with our highly skilled professional partners at National Committee for Quality Assurance, Integrated Healthcare Association, Pacific Business Group on Health, and American Institutes for Research that has made 2018 a successful year in meeting this goal.

OPA set out to accomplish two major tasks this year; move to a five-star rating system and develop a more contemporary user-friendly website. Both of these tasks involved complexities and challenges that required a high level of expertise provided by our partners. While we are pleased with these improvements, it does not mark an end. We will continue to find ways to enhance the consumer experience and to publish quality ratings and information. Read on to learn more about our activities and learn about one of our valued partners, Pacific Business Group on Health.

OPA TO RELEASE NEW FIVE-STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM

For the last few years, OPA has wanted to shift from a four-star to a five-star rating system in an effort to better align the report card scores to other rating systems. It seemed only natural to adopt a rating scale that was more familiar to consumers such as those used in healthcare by Covered California and The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and other rating schemes such as Yelp and Trip Advisor. Indeed, initial consumer testing from our partners at the American Institutes for Research supported this idea with participants citing their preferences for five star displays because “[these] types of displays seemed to be the norm”. However, what initially seemed to be a simple change turned into a years’ long endeavor involving consumer testing, methodological analysis and consulting with our data partners and other stakeholders. In addition to consumer perspectives, there were methodological changes to consider. Data cut points had to be discussed and analyzed; there were ongoing debates on whether to use a clustering or percentile

OUR MISSION

To improve California health care quality and advocate for consumer interests by publicly reporting data for informed decision making.

CORE VALUES:

- Transparency
- Consumer – Oriented
- High Quality Information

approach and careful consideration as to how possible changes could have adverse or favorable effects on final ratings. Finally, after three years of research, analysis and planning, OPA is proud to announce the five-star quality rating system was approved this summer and will be released with the publication of the 2018-19 Health Care Quality Report Cards this fall.

If you would like more information on the methodology behind the new five-star ratings, contact ruben.mejia@opa.ca.gov.

OPA PARTNER INSIGHTS

OPA staff interviewed the Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH), which is the largest nonprofit, multi-stakeholder program in the country. PBGH provides patient experience data for OPA's Commercial Medical Group Report Card. Rachel Brodie is the Director of Performance Information and Emily London is the Senior Manager of the Patient Assessment Survey (PAS). The PAS program has been gathering patient feedback and producing Provider Organization ratings for 18 years and

Patient experience data is collected from over 40,000 patients and ratings are produced for 165 organizations. Results are publicly reported by OPA and are used in quality-based incentive payments through the Integrated Healthcare Association (IHA), another OPA partner.



Pictured: Emily London and Rachel Brodie from PBGH

PBGH's vision is to support a healthcare system driven to deliver the best health outcomes, experience, and affordability for consumers and purchasers. This aligns with OPA's goal of improving healthcare quality and advocating for consumers interests. How could OPA's work and the work we do together further help support and expand your vision?

PBGH and OPA both want to make sure all parties involved in healthcare have access to the information they need to make informed decisions. For patients, performance information can help them choose a medical group. Health plans can use the data to determine which medical groups should receive a performance bonus, and administrators are able to benchmark against their peers and identify where to focus improvement efforts.

We appreciate the partnership with OPA to make our data available to consumers, and for providing us with ideas about how to make our data more accessible. For example, our transition to a 5-star rating scale was initiated by OPA's input that this is a more familiar rating system for consumers. We hope consumers will find this new rating system easier to use in finding healthcare that fits their needs.

A significant part of the challenge in measuring performance in health care comes from the different nature and variable perspectives represented among the key stakeholders. How does PBGH work to present findings

and address the physician's perspective, public policy perspective and finally to the consumer's perspective? Especially considering that these varying perspectives sometimes disagree with each other.

We have a long history of convening multiple stakeholders with different viewpoints to obtain consensus when developing our survey instrument, methodology, and sharing of results. We use the Clinician and Group Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CG-CAHPS) tool as the basis for our survey, which was developed through a lengthy process of gathering perspectives from patients and physicians on aspects of care that are important and measurable.

Our program uses standardized measurement across all 165 organizations, which gives physicians confidence in the reliability of the results. The scores are used in pay-for-performance and public reporting to encourage competition and accountability. Public reporting of the results also ensures that patients have free access to information about each medical group they might be considering for their care.

How do you see your work influencing work in improvements of performance at the physician level, at the medical group level and overall?

We are a great source of data for medical groups to see how their performance compares to their peers. We provide trending information so they can see how they are improving over time, and also as compared to their peers. We provide a key driver analysis that helps them understand which aspects of care are contributing most to their overall scores, so that they can focus on those particular areas for improvement.

What are some of the biggest obstacles you face in collecting patient experience data and what is your approach to overcoming these challenges?

Our biggest challenge is working to maintain sufficient response rates to the survey. We are all inundated with multiple surveys about every service we receive, which causes people to question whether to complete each one. We have tried to get ahead of this by testing new ways to reach patients. We fielded an ultra-short version of the survey and tested different invitation language last year. This year, we are looking at text messaging as a new way to field our survey. We are hoping these variations will improve response rates.

Sounds very exciting! OPA looks forward to working with PBGH on upcoming projects such as incorporating Timely Access to Care data on the OPA website, expanding data available on the report cards and working towards our common goals.

INTRODUCING THE NEW OPA WEBSITE

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement in providing consumers accurate and accessible information, we are revamping the look and feel of our website. We have removed outdated pages, updated the displays and content, and redeveloped the website architecture. The site will now have a more simplified, contemporary look and streamlined with navigation that is more responsive. Additionally, we are working to ensure that these enhancements are also ADA compliant. With the launch of our new website, we hope to improve engagement with consumers and provide them with a more efficient and usable means of accessing our site and the Health Care Quality Report Card ratings. Websites updates will be deployed on a rolling basis. We invite you to regularly visit our [website](#) for updates and [contact us](#) with any questions or concerns.

REMINDER! OPEN ENROLLMENT 2019

CalPERS open enrollment may have ended, but open enrollment for the 2019 [Covered California Marketplace](#) coverage is now open! If you're thinking of enrolling or changing your health plan, be sure to check the [health plan ratings](#) on OPA's Healthcare Quality Report Cards.

Here are some important enrollment dates to mark on your calendar:

- The [2019 Open Enrollment Period](#) began **Monday, October 15, 2018**, and runs through **Tuesday, January 15, 2019**.
- After January 15, you can only enroll for 2019 health insurance if you qualify for a special enrollment period.
- Missed the deadline? For more information on qualifying life events for special enrollments look [here](#).
- New enrollments or changes made before **December 15, 2018** take effect **January 1, 2019**. Changes made after that date will begin on **February 1, 2019**.

COMING SOON

Stay tuned for the dates on these events. Be sure to check our website and social media pages for additional details.

- October 31, 2018 – Launch of Phase I of OPA website redesign
- November 7, 2018 – Release of 2018-2019 Health Care Quality Report Cards
- Mid-February, 2019 – Launch of Phase II of OPA website redesign, including updated Report Card pages
- Late February, 2019 – Release of the 2018-2019 Medical Group, Medicare Report Card
- March 15, 2019 – Publication of Spring 2019 edition of The OPA Insider

WELCOME TO OPA!



We are pleased to announce the recent addition of Barbara Clopton to the OPA team. She worked in the field of television production for 16 years before joining us this summer. She has both public policy and multi-media experience having worked as a production assistant for the Sacramento Cable Commission, as a client service coordinator for Gannett Media, and as an appointed member to the City of Toronto's Public Advisory Committee. She will be working closely with the Department of Healthcare Services EITS team in updating the OPA website and assisting in data reporting and analysis projects.

Barbara earned her B.A. in Public Affairs from the University of Southern California.

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